

**DRAFT INITIAL STUDY/  
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

**Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project  
Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office  
Bishop, California**

**January 2006**



**State of California  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

## **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

PROJECT: Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection

LEAD AGENCY: California Department of Parks and Recreation

AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS: The Initial Study for this Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for review at:

- Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office  
351 Pacu Lane, Suite 100  
Bishop, CA 93514  
(760) 872-5033  
Contact – Richard Williams
- California Department of Parks & Recreation  
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division  
1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
(916) 324-4442  
Contact – Jennifer Buckingham

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project has two components consisting of a trail closure/re-route and the armoring of another nearby trail on Bureau of Land Management land within the Bishop Field Office area in Mono County. Both project areas are within an alkali meadow (sensitive plant community) and in the vicinity of a popular fishing lake, Fish Slough Lake. The trail being closed is approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile in length and access will be barricaded on either end with large rocks. The compacted soils along the closed trail will be loosened using a D-8 Dozer. The trail re-route, which will avoid sensitive habitats, will be approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile long. It will be constructed through desert scrub habitat with a D-8 Dozer. The trail armoring will be completed using shale obtained from a nearby mineral material site. The construction portion of the project will take approximately two to three weeks. Dozer and loader work will take place in the late summer or early fall when soils are dry.

The goal of this project is to eliminate impacts to a rare plant community and listed plant species that occur there.

### **FINDINGS**

The Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division, having reviewed the Initial Study for the proposed project, finds that:

1. The proposed project will:
  - Restore and protect sensitive plants and a sensitive plant community (alkali meadow) by:
    - closing  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of Eastside trail
    - re-routing  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of Eastside trail around alkali meadow and through desert scrub plant community
    - armoring a trail leading up to Fish Slough Lake

2. The project will not affect any environmental effects as identified in the Initial Study Checklist as exceeding significance thresholds. The following mitigation measure will reduce impacts to biological resources to less than significant:

**Measure Bio-1:** Implementation of these measures will ensure that no significant impacts occur as a result of the proposed project. These measures also ensure that no CEQA Standards of Significance are exceeded, and are as follows:

- If the project cannot be completed outside of the bird nesting season (February 1 through August 31 of any given year), a qualified biologist would conduct a pre-construction survey for nesting birds (especially within the trail re-route section where vegetation is to be removed) prior to starting work if the work has the potential to impact nesting birds. If nesting birds are found, implementation of the project may be delayed until after nesting is completed. Work may occur if an adequate buffer, as determined by a qualified biologist, can be established between the construction activity and the nest.
- The project footprint shall be surveyed for the presence of any listed and/or special status plants prior to start of construction. If any listed and/or special status plants cannot be positively identified outside of the blooming period, surveys should take place during the appropriate bloom time (prior to the start of construction) for the plants listed in Table 1. If any listed plant species or other sensitive plants are discovered during these surveys, the occurrence shall be flagged and avoided within the limits of project construction.
- Surveys for noxious weed infestations will be completed prior to and after completion of the project. If any noxious weed infestations are identified within or adjacent to the project area, the weeds will be immediately removed by hand pulling or digging to ensure that no noxious weed bank would develop.
- Staging areas shall be clearly flagged to prevent heavy equipment from damaging sensitive habitats and plant species.

3. A Mitigated Negative Declaration will be filed as the appropriate CEQA document for the Project.

## **BASIS OF FINDINGS**

Based on the environmental evaluation presented herein, the Project will not cause significant adverse effects related to aesthetics, agricultural resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards and hazardous materials, land use/planning, mineral resources, population/housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, and utilities/service systems. In addition, substantial adverse effects on humans, either direct or indirect, will not occur. The Project does not affect any important examples of the major periods of California prehistory or history. Nor will the Project cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. Best Management Practices will be used during and after construction to control erosion in ground disturbed areas.

A copy of the Initial Study is attached. Questions or comments regarding this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration should be submitted in writing to:

Jennifer Buckingham – Associate Parks and Recreation Specialist  
California Department of Parks & Recreation  
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division  
1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95816

Pursuant to Section 21082.1 of the California Environmental Quality Act, the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has independently reviewed and analyzed the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed project and finds that these documents reflect the independent judgment of the DPR.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

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### 1.1 Introduction and Regulatory Guidance

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared by the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). The purpose of the Initial Study is to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project at Bureau of Land Management Bishop Field Office, Mono County, California.

This restoration and protection project will involve:

1. Closure of  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of Eastside trail through an alkali meadow in the Fish Slough Area
2. Construct  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile trail re-route around portion of closed Eastside trail through desert scrub plant community
3. Armor trail leading up to Fish Slough Lake

This document has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code §21000 *et seq.*, and the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations (CCR) §15000 *et seq.*

An Initial Study is conducted by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment [CEQA Guidelines §15063(a)]. If there is substantial evidence that a project may have a significant effect on the environment, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064(a). However, if the lead agency determines the impacts are to a less-than-significant level, a Negative Declaration may be prepared instead of an EIR [CEQA Guidelines §15070(b)]. The lead agency prepares a written statement describing the reasons a proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, why an EIR need not be prepared. This IS/MND conforms to the content requirements under CEQA Guidelines §15071.

## 1.2 Lead Agency

The lead agency is the public agency with primary approval authority over the proposed project. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15051(b)(1), "the lead agency will normally be an agency with general governmental powers, such as a city or county, rather than an agency with a single or limited purpose." The lead agency for the proposed project is the DPR. The contact person for the lead agency is:

Jennifer Buckingham – Associate Parks and Recreation Specialist  
California Department of Parks & Recreation  
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division  
1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
(916) 324-4442

Questions or comments regarding this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration should be submitted to:

Jennifer Buckingham – Associate Parks and Recreation Specialist  
California Department of Parks & Recreation  
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division  
1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
(916) 324-4442

## 1.3 Purpose and Document Organization

The purpose of this document is to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project with the Bishop Field Office.

This document is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1 - Introduction  
This chapter provides an introduction to the project and describes the purpose and organization of this document.
- Chapter 2 - Project Description  
This chapter describes the project location, project area, and site description, objectives, characteristics and related projects.
- Chapter 3 - Environmental Checklist and Responses  
This chapter contains the Environmental (Initial Study) Checklist that identifies the significance of potential environmental impacts (by environmental issue) and a brief discussion of each impact resulting from implementation of the proposed project. This chapter also contains the Mandatory Findings of Significance.
- Chapter 4 – Report Preparation  
This chapter provides a list of those involved in the preparation of this document.

## **Chapter 2 Project Description**

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### **2.1 Project Location and Site Description**

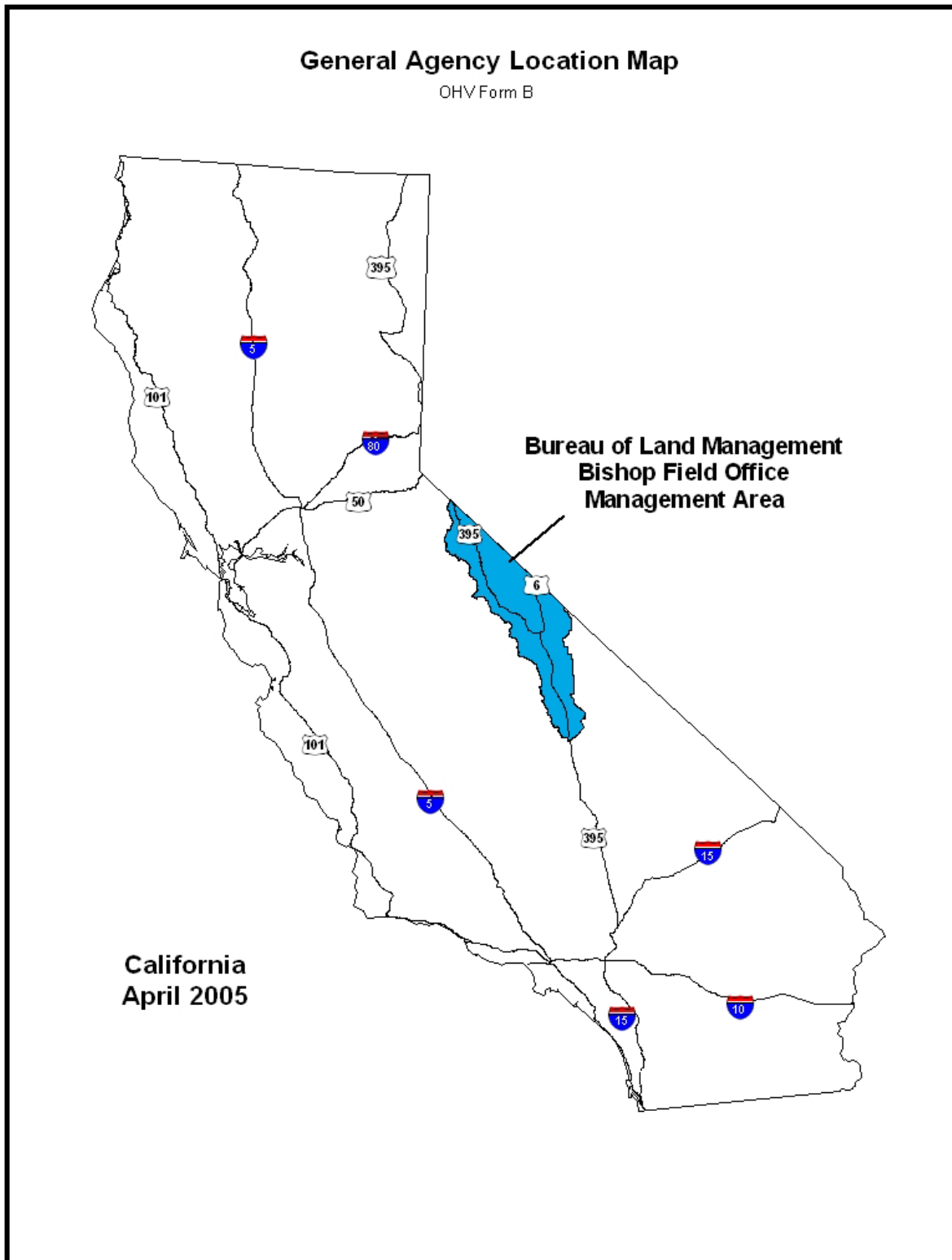
This project is located within the southern part of Mono County, California (see Fig. 1). It is within lands owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bishop Field Office. The Bishop Field Office manages 750,000 acres of public lands in Mono and Inyo counties which span the length of the eastern Sierra from Topaz Lake to Owens Lake. The project is more specifically located within the Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in the Volcanic Tableland Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Management area (see Fig. 2). The Fish Slough ACEC is approximately seven miles north of Bishop, California.

The Volcanic Tableland OHV Management Area encompasses 178,220 acres; within this area is the 36,000 acre Fish Slough ACEC. The Fish Slough ACEC is located in the transition zone between the Mojave Desert and Great Basin biotic communities and includes a variety of plant communities such as wetlands, uplands, and alkali meadows. This area represents one of the richest wetland floras of the Great Basin. The alkali meadow portion of the Fish Slough ACEC contains a number of rare endemic plants including the Fish Slough milk-vetch and the alkali Mariposa lily.

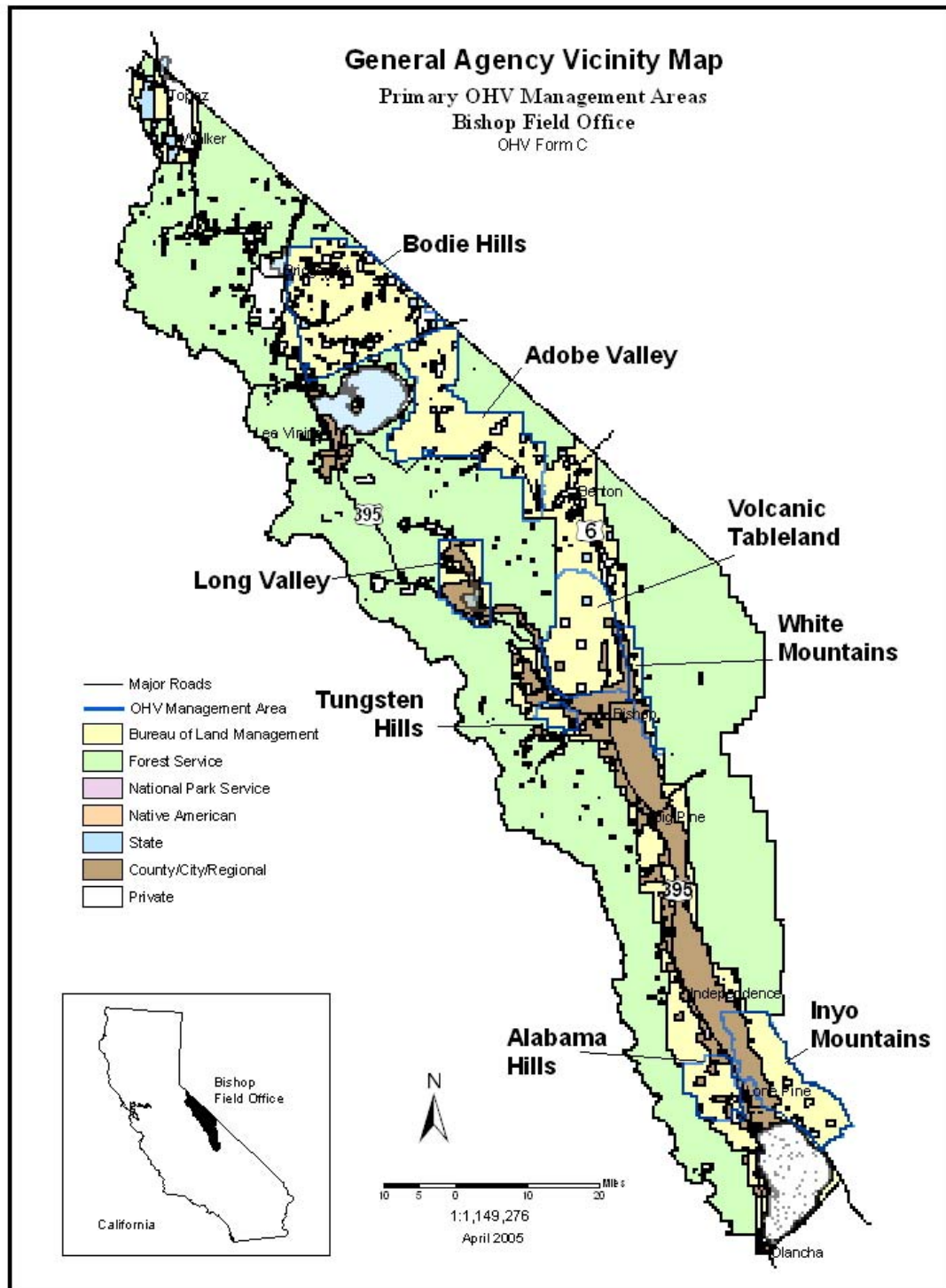
The proposed project has two different construction locations. Both construction locations are within the alkali meadow portion of Fish Slough ACEC and are on either the northeast or southwest side of Fish Slough Lake, which is a popular fishing lake (see Fig. 4). The sites are approximately 0.5 mile apart. The first location, along Eastside Road, is approximately 0.4 mile northeast of Fish Slough Lake. The second location is the trail armoring project on Fish Slough Road which is approximately 0.1 mile southwest of Fish Slough Lake (see Fig. 4).



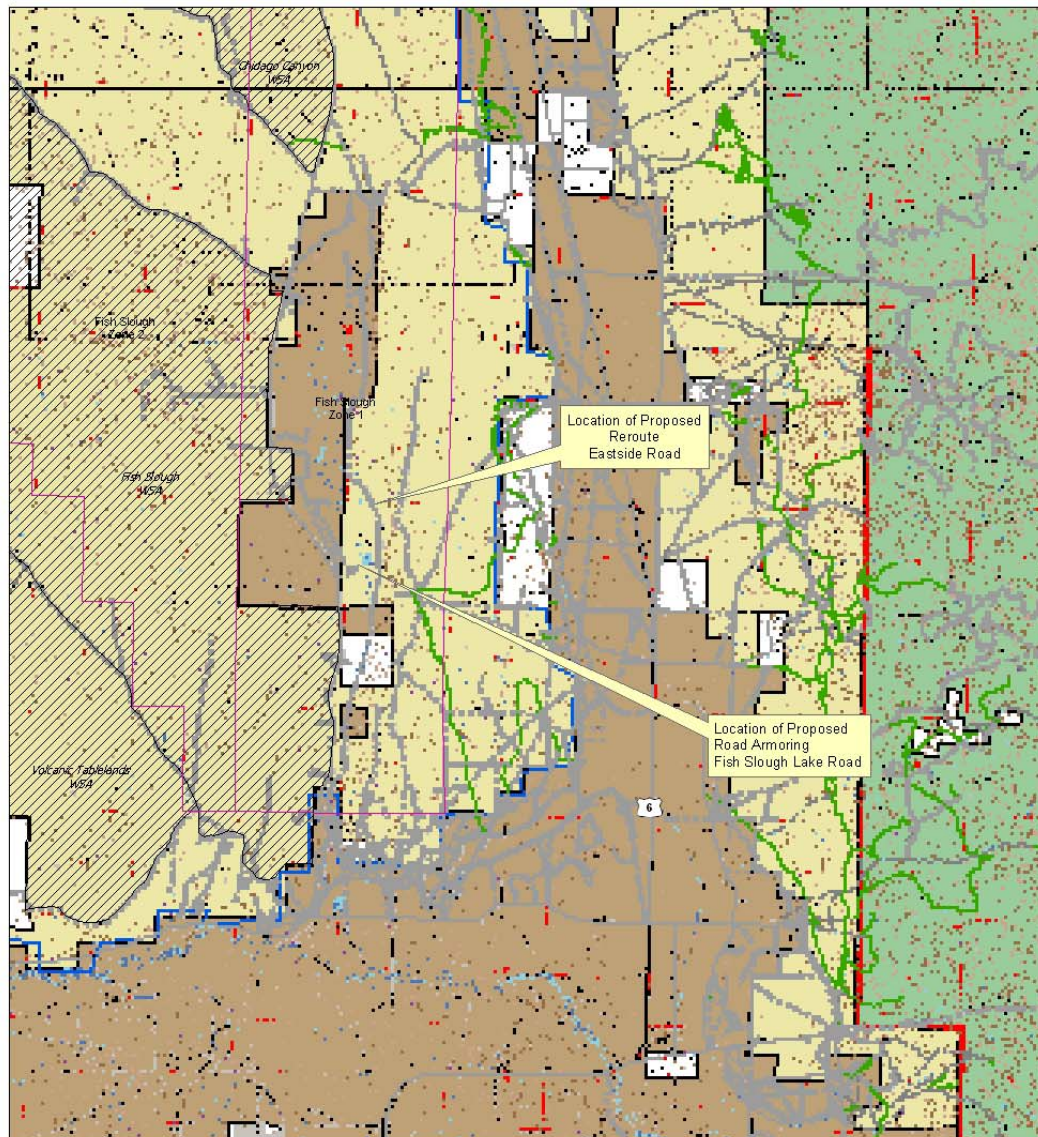
**Figure 1. General Agency Location Map.** Source: BLM Application for State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Maintenance, Trail Conservation, and Trail Reroute Grant Application Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project, #OR-1-B-55, 2005 – 2006.



**Figure 2. General Agency Vicinity Map.** Proposed project located within the Volcanic Tableland Area. Source: BLM Application for State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Maintenance, Trail Conservation, and Trail Reroute Grant Application Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project, #OR-1-B-55, 2005 - 2006



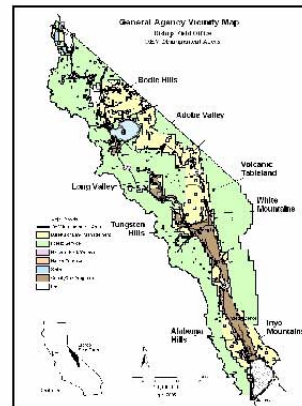
**Figure 3. Fish Slough ACEC General Project Location.** Source: BLM Bishop FO, Nov 2005.



**Fish Slough ACEC  
General Project Location  
(Inset Location  
Volcanic Tableland)**

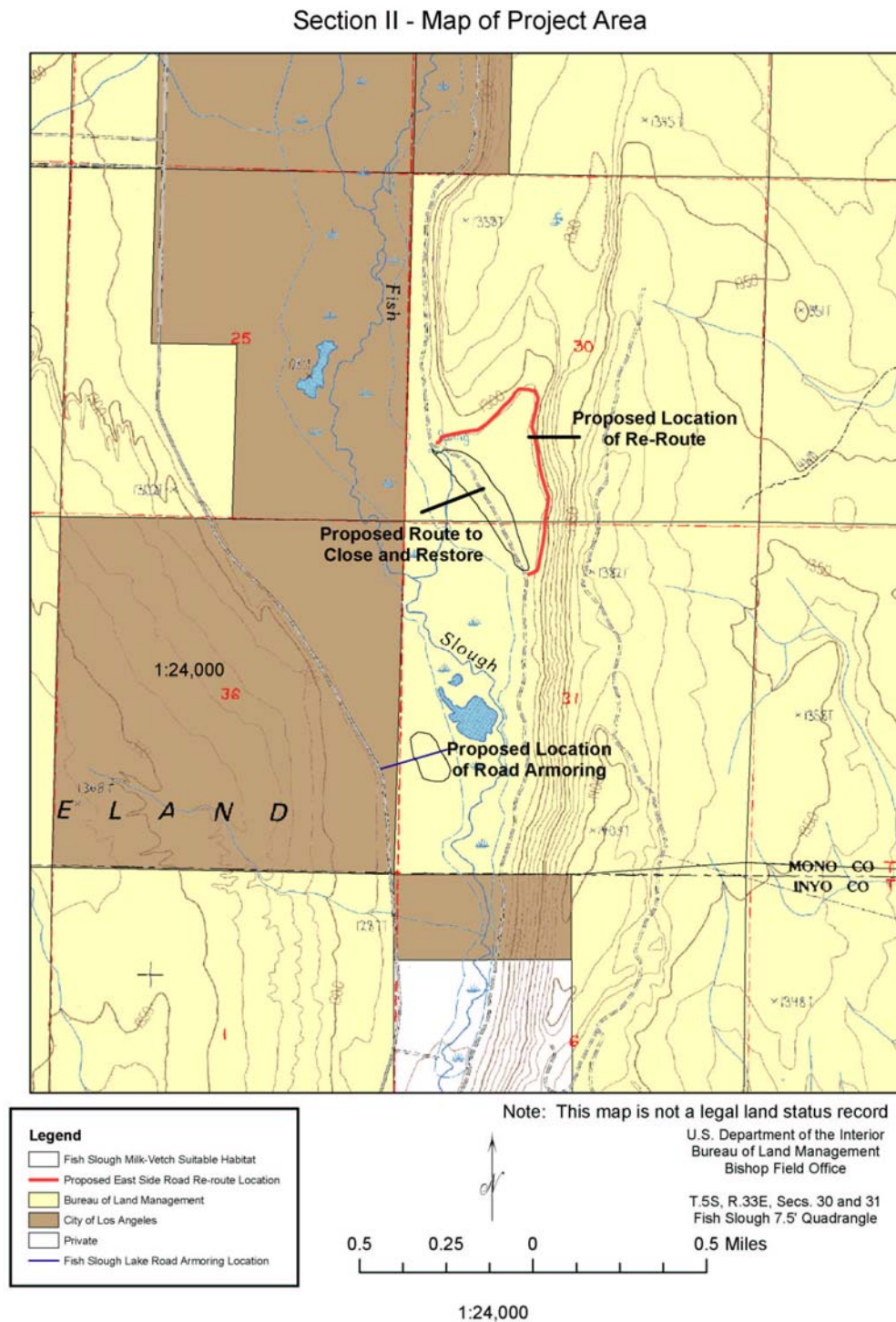


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Bishop Field Office  
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April 2005





**Figure 4. Map of Project Area.** Source: BLM Bishop FO, Nov. 2005.



## 2.2 Project Objectives

The objective of this project is to protect and restore rare plant habitat and populations in the Fish Slough Area, a designated State of California Rare Natural Community (Alkali Meadow). Rare plants to be protected include the Federally Threatened Fish Slough milkvetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus*) and two BLM Special Status Plant Species: the Inyo County mariposa lily (*Calochortus excavatus*) and alkali ivesia (*Ivesia kingii* var. *kingii*). Furthermore, project objectives adhere to the goals set forth for the Fish Slough ACEC in the *Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision*, which include protection of endangered fish and sensitive plant habitats, wetlands, cultural properties, geologic features and scenic values.

## 2.3 Project Characteristics

The project has two components consisting of a trail closure/re-route along Eastside Road and the armoring of Fish Slough Road, another nearby trail. Both project areas are in the vicinity of Fish Slough Lake, which is a popular fishing lake. The construction portion of the project will take approximately two to three weeks. Dozer and loader work will take place in the late summer or early fall when soils are dry.

### Trail Closure and Re-Route

A section of Eastside Road, an off-highway vehicle trail north of Fish Slough Lake, currently runs through an alkali meadow that contains both critical habitat and populations of three rare plants. These plants are the Fish Slough milkvetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus*), Inyo County mariposa lily (*Calochortus excavatus*) and alkali ivesia (*Ivesia kingii* var. *kingii*). This section of the trail would be closed and re-routed to go around the alkali meadow and through desert scrub, a less ecologically sensitive site (see Photo 1). The length of the trail being closed and the new trail are about the same, approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile in length (see Fig. 4, Map of Project Area).

Access points to closed portions of the Eastside trail would be barricaded with parent rock (volcanic tuff) material. The parent rock material would be collected from along side the main county road and transported a short distance to access points on either end of the route closure. The parent rock material consists of large rocks that were piled adjacent to the county road during its construction. In addition to barricading trail access, the closed trail would be ripped using a D-8 dozer/backhoe with a ripper attachment. Ripping this type of site, which contains Aquic Torriorthant soils, has been effective at other restoration sites since salt grass and cord grass rhizomes are brought to the surface and re-sprout vigorously the following spring.

The new route would be constructed using a D-8 dozer/backhoe with a ripper attachment. The D-8 dozer would make two to three passes to establish the new trail. Large shrubs mostly consisting of Great Basin sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) would be removed and salvaged for hill climb restoration work not associated with this project. The new road would be signed to direct the public to the new access.



**Photo 1. Fish Slough Eastside Road.** Location of proposed trail re-route and location of existing road proposed for restoration. (Source: BLM Bishop FO, Nov. 2005)

### Armoring of Fish Slough Lake Road

The off-highway vehicle trail leading up to Fish Slough Lake has become highly eroded due to improper runoff and pooling of water (see Photo 2). Pooling water and muddy road conditions have caused OHV users to travel off of the designated trail. Fish Slough Lake Road is within an alkali meadow that contains populations of Fish Slough milkvetch and alkali ivesia, therefore it is critical that OHV users stay on designated roads. This portion of the project would repair erosion damage and armor 650 feet of Fish Slough Lake Road thus improving road conditions, protecting from future damage, and encouraging users to stay on the trail.

The armoring of Fish Slough Lake road would entail filling the existing route with a two to three-foot (one meter) layer of shale. This shale will be obtained from an existing mineral material site up Silver Canyon in the White Mountains, which is approximately five miles from the project site. Silver Canyon will be accessed from the project site by traveling on a County maintained dirt road and paved US Highway 395. The shale is very angular allowing sufficient drainage while providing a resilient tread surface, which would not sink under frequent vehicular traffic. A 10-yard dump truck will be used to haul the shale. Roughly 1,000 cubic yards will be required to armor the road. It will take 5 to 6 truckloads to transport this amount of material. A D-8 dozer and a loader would be used to spread the shale on the road surface. The existing rock barricade along both sides of the road would be left in place to encourage visitors to stay on the existing route and not drive around into the population of Fish Slough milk-vetch and alkali



ivesia.



**Photo 2. Portion of Fish Slough Road proposed for armoring with water permeable shale.** Photo looking west. (Source: BLM Bishop FO, Nov. 2005)



**Photo 3. Portion of Fish Slough Road proposed for armoring.** Photo looking east. Note existing rock barriers. (Source: BLM Bishop FO, Nov. 2005)

### Monitoring and Maintenance

Follow-up monitoring for the project would consist of documenting visitor compliance with the new re-route and armored road with traffic counters and visual assessments by rangers, BLM staff and volunteers. Visual assessments would occur every two weeks between November and May when sites are wet from standing water. Assessments of rare plant habitat would

involve documentation of changes in plant cover including rare plant associate species, e.g. *Ivesia kingii*, *Sporobolus airoides*, *Spartina gracilis* and *Distichlis spicata* as well as documentation of any new recruitment of the Fish Slough milkvetch and/or Inyo County mariposa lily. Standard BLM monitoring methods (BLM Tech. Ref 1730-1) would document plant cover and assess natural recruitment of rare plants. Monitoring plants would take place once a year in May or June. Success criteria would consist of: 1) a 10 to 15% increase in plant cover within three years after project implementation; 2) a 90% visitor compliance rate with the re-route; and 3) a 90% reduction of vehicular impacts, e.g., frequency of tire tracks indicating that people drove over rare plant habitat.

## **Law Enforcement**

The Fish Slough Rare Plant Project area will be patrolled by a federal law enforcement officer at a minimum of twice per week.

## **2.4 List of BLM Standard Operating Procedures/Best Management Practices to be implemented during project construction**

Existing BLM Standard Operating Procedures and Best Management Practices generate the following Management Requirements that apply to the project. The following measures were compiled from the *High Desert Off-Highway Vehicle Project Management Plan* and the *Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision*. Where relevant, these standards will be discussed in more detail in the appropriate section of the environmental impact discussion. These measures are incorporated into the project and will minimize the impacts of the project.

### Air Quality

- Water all active construction areas at least twice daily. Frequency should be based on the type of operation, soil, and wind exposure.
- Prohibit all grading activities during periods of high wind (over 15 mph).
- Haul trucks shall maintain at least two feet of freeboard.
- Plant vegetative ground cover in disturbed areas as soon as possible.
- Cover inactive storage piles.
- Install wheel washers at the entrance to construction sites for all exiting trucks.
- Sweep streets if visible soil material is carried out from the construction site.
- Post a publicly visible sign, which specifies the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond to complaints and take corrective action within 48 hours. The phone number of the BLM Bishop FO shall be visible to ensure compliance.
- Limit the area under construction at any one time.

### Biological Resources

- To prevent the spread of noxious weeds, all project related equipment must be cleaned and treated for weed seed pre and post project implementation.
- Any mulches, fills, or revegetation seeding used during or after project implementation shall be certified as weed free.

### Cultural Resources

- Due to the vagaries of time and shifting sediments in the area, the Bishop Field Office archaeologist will survey the final proposed route alignment prior to implementation. If any late discoveries of significant archaeological sites are made the route will be adjusted to avoid these properties.



### Erosion and Sediment Control

- *Topsoil Salvage:* Retention of topsoil and of associated indigenous seed bank and soil micro biota is fundamental to facilitating site restoration and reducing site rehabilitation costs. BLM shall salvage all topsoil and re-spread it as soon as possible following soil disturbance. Proper interim protection and storage of topsoil is essential before re-spreading. Topsoil shall remain covered to protect it from soil loss and degradation of soil biota. If a highly structured soil exists on the site, soil removal will entail separating solid horizons or sub-horizons.
- *Minimize Earth Movement:* Confine construction to the most level portions of the site. Keep disturbed areas small.
- *Avoid Steep Slopes and Highly Erodible Soils:* Leaving such areas undisturbed minimizes the need for costly control measures and reduces the risk of property damage and water pollution. Design impact on slopes no steeper than 3:1 ratio.
- *Align Roads along Contours:* Runoff down roadways is a common cause of erosion problems. Aligning roads along contours minimizes the velocity of roadway runoff. In addition, such alignment blends into the landscape better without being visually obtrusive.
- *Retain Natural Vegetation Whenever Feasible:* Vegetation is the most effective form of erosion control. Saving and salvaging vegetation reduces the need to build costly structural controls such as sediment basins and concrete-lined channels.
- *Vegetate and Mulch Denuded Areas:* Mulch helps protect the soil until vegetation is established. It also improves the rate of seedling establishment.
- *Divert Runoff Away from Denuded Areas:* When vegetative cover is removed from a slope, the slope becomes highly susceptible to erosion. Only the runoff from rain that falls directly on the disturbed slope should be allowed to cross it. Divert upslope runoff away to a stable outlet.
- *Soil, Water, and Air:* Limit vegetation removal and other surface disturbing activities to the minimum required for project implementation. Require soil retaining structures or other special methods as needed to control erosion on steep slopes or unstable soils.
- Avoid the use of soil disturbing equipment or vehicles on wet, poorly drained or erosive soils.
- Secure any necessary permits or clearances from state and local agencies relative to air quality requirements for projects that may impact air quality.

### Noise

- Heavy equipment use will be restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays.

### Water Quality

- Erosion from nonpoint pollution sources shall be minimized through implementation of BMPs such as correct spacing of waterbars on trails, locating roads and trails on natural benches or ridges well away from stream courses and other water bodies, avoid creating berms that hinder drainage on low gradient roads, revegetate roads and trails when use is terminated.
- All necessary control measures for minimizing erosion and sedimentation, whether structural or vegetal, shall be properly established prior to November 15 each year.
- All structural and vegetal measures taken to control erosion and sedimentation shall be properly maintained.

- A filter strip of appropriate width, and consisting of undisturbed soil and riparian vegetation or its equivalent, shall be maintained, wherever possible, between significant land disturbance activities and watercourses, lakes, bays, estuaries, marshes, and other water bodies. For construction activities, minimum width of the filter strip shall be thirty feet, wherever possible as measured along the ground surface to the highest anticipated water line.
- Design and maintenance of erosion and sediment control structures, (e.g. debris and settling basins, drainage ditches, culverts, etc.) shall comply with accepted engineering practices.

## Chapter 3 Environmental Checklist and Responses

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### 3.1 Project Information

1. **Project Title:** Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project
2. **Lead Agency Name And Address:**  
 State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation  
 Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division  
 1725 23rd Street, Suite 200 Sacramento, CA 95816
3. **Contact Person And Phone Number:**  
 Jennifer Buckingham, State of California Department of Parks and Recreation  
 Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division  
 (916) 324-4442 Email: jbuck@parks.ca.gov
4. **Project Location:** Mono County, California
5. **Project Sponsor's Name And Address:**  
 Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office  
 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 100  
 Bishop, CA 93514
6. **General Plan Designation:** Not applicable, these are federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.
7. **Zoning:** Not Applicable
8. **Description Of Project:** See Chapter 2.
9. **Project Objectives:** To protect and restore rare plant habitat and populations in the Fish Slough Area, a designated State of California Rare Natural Community (Alkali Meadow). Rare plants to be protected include the Federally Threatened Fish Slough milkvetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus*) and two BLM Special Status Plant Species: the Inyo County mariposa lily (*Calochortus excavatus*) and alkali ivesia (*Ivesia kingii* var. *kingii*).
10. **Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:**  
 The Fish Slough Area encompasses lands within Inyo and Mono counties of California. It is managed and owned by the Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office. The Bishop Field Office manages approximately 750,000 acres of public land and is surrounded by the Bodie Hills to the north, the White/Inyo mountains to the east, Owens Lake to the south, and the eastern Sierra to the west. Surrounding land uses include the Inyo National Forest and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. There is also some private land ownership but it only comprises about two percent of the total land in Inyo County and six percent of the total land in Mono County.

11. **Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required:** None. The California Department of Parks and Recreation Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division, the Lead Agency, will do financing approval and participation agreements as necessary.

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:**

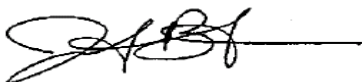
The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Aesthetics</b>                        | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Agriculture Resources</b>              | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Air Quality</b>            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Biological Resources</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural Resources</b>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Geology /Soils</b>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hazards &amp; Hazardous Materials</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hydrology / Water Quality</b>          | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Land Use / Planning</b>    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mineral Resources</b>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Noise</b>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Population / Housing</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Public Services</b>                   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Recreation</b>                         | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Transportation/Traffic</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Utilities / Service Systems</b>       | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mandatory Findings of Significance</b> |  |

**DETERMINATION:** (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.



Jennifer Buckingham, State of California Department of Parks and Recreation

1/11/06

Date

**EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:**

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact". The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from Section XVII, Earlier Analyses, may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
  - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
  - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
  - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated", describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
  - a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
  - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

### 3.2 Environmental Issues

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>I. AESTHETICS -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### I. AESTHETICS

##### Sources:

- 1) Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office. *Application for State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Maintenance, Trail Conservation, and Trail Reroute Grant Application Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project*, #OR-1-B-55, 2005 – 2006.
- 2) California Scenic Highway Mapping System. December 28, 1999. California Department of Transportation. November 22, 2005.  
{[http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic\\_highways/](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/)}.
- 3) National Geographic Maps. TOPO!. 2004.

##### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** Highway 395, an officially designated state scenic highway, is within ten miles of the proposed project. However, the proposed trail re-route would not affect visual resources because the project site cannot be seen from Highway 395 due to intervening topography. The trail armoring along Fish Slough Road would not significantly affect visual resources because the road already exists. The project does not involve any new light source and no new structures are proposed that may create a source of glare.

*Would the project:*

##### a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

**No Impact.** The project site is not part of a scenic vista, nor would it block views of a scenic vista from an existing or proposed development.

##### b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?



**No Impact.** Highway 395 becomes a scenic highway when it crosses from Inyo County into Mono County. The scenic highway portion of Highway 395 in Mono County is approximately ten miles west of the project area at its closest. The project area cannot be seen from this portion of Highway 395 due to a rise and fall in elevation between to the two locations.

**c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The trail re-route will remove a small amount of shrubs within the desert scrub plant community while improving a portion of the adjacent rare alkali meadow plant community through trail closure. Because the majority of land surrounding the project is desert scrub and there is only a small amount of shrubs being removed for the trail re-route the quality of the site will not be substantially degraded. Additionally, there are no visually unique or distinctive features on the project site that would be affected by the project.

**d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?**

**No Impact.** No new lights are proposed.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES</b> -- In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

### Sources:

- 1) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993.
- 2) Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office. *Application for State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Maintenance, Trail Conservation, and Trail Reroute Grant Application Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project*, #OR-1-B-55, 2005 – 2006.
- 3) Natural Resources Conservation Service. Web Soil Survey. Accessed December 15, 2005. <http://soils.usda.gov/>.

### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** The project would not create adverse impacts to agricultural resources because the site does not contain Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Grazing does occur on BLM lands but is not permitted in the project area.

*Would the project:*

**a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?**

- b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?**
- c. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?**

**No Impact.** Responses a-c. The project site is within an alkali meadow containing Aquic Torriorthents soils. The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service has rated these soils as not prime farmland, subject to severe soil rutting and somewhat poorly drained. Therefore, the project would not create adverse impacts to agricultural resources because the site does not contain Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Grazing does occur on BLM lands but is not permitted in the project area. Due to a regulation in the Bishop Resource Management Plan (BRMP) regarding habitat sensitivity, the alkali meadow within the Fish Slough Area is fenced to exclude any ranching or grazing activities. Therefore, potential and actual ranching and/or grazing activities will not be affected by the project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>III. AIR QUALITY</b> -- Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### III. AIR QUALITY

#### Sources:

- 1) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993.
- 2) Larry Cameron, Air Quality Specialist. Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District. Personal communications. November 2005.

#### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** Due to the size of the project area, the short construction period (two to three weeks), and the use of air quality BMPs this project will not incrementally or cumulatively cause air quality levels to exceed significance standards.

*Would the project:*

- a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?
- b. Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

- c. **Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?**
- d. **Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Responses a – d. The project involves only minor grading using a D8 Dozer on a total of one and a half miles of trail and dumping of approximately 1,000 cubic yards of material to armor another trail. Localized air quality degradation could result either from diesel exhaust from the 10 yard dump truck or D8 Dozer while the minor grading and rock transport is being conducted and/or dust being generated during grading and rock spreading activities. The operation of the equipment will occur during weekdays when the area has the fewest visitors. The closest residence to the project site is two and a half miles to the south. The remoteness of the site and small scale of the operation makes the air quality impacts of the project less than significant. Additionally, Larry Cameron of the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District reported the project area to be in attainment for particulate matter (PM-10). BMPs to be implemented during the project to minimize impacts to air quality are listed on page 11.

- e. **Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?**

**No Impact.** The activities associated with the construction and operation of the proposed project will not result in the creation of objectionable odors.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

##### Sources:

- 1) Anne Halford, Botanist. BLM Bishop Field Office. Personal communications. November 2005.
- 2) Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office. *Application for State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Maintenance, Trail Conservation, and Trail Reroute Grant Application Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project*, #OR-1-B-55, 2005 – 2006.
- 3) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993.
- 4) California Native Plant Society. 2005. Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants, 6th Edition. November 22, 2005.
- 5) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), Wildlife & Habitat Data Analysis Branch, Department of Fish and Game, February 6, 2005.

##### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** A number of listed and special status plant and animal species are found within the Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Potentially significant impacts to these species from the implementation of the proposed project will be reduced to less than significant due to the incorporation of mitigation measures into the project.

*Would the project:*

**a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporation.** A complete list of Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive species known to occur or that have potential to occur within the project area are listed in Table 1, below. Table 1 indicates listing status, habitat requirements and if the species has been previously detected within or adjacent to the project area.

**Table 1**  
**List of Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species within the Fish Slough Area**

Species	Listing Status	Habitat	Potential for Occurrence
<b>Dicotyledonous Plants</b>			
Hall's hawksbeard <i>Crepis runcinata</i> ssp. <i>hallii</i> Asteraceae	CNPS List 2	Desert scrub and piñon-juniper woodland on mesic, alkaline soils 1250 to 1450 m elevation	Known to occur in Fish Slough ACEC
Entireleaved thelypody <i>Thelypodium integrifolium</i> ssp. <i>complanatum</i> Brassicaceae	CNPS List 2	Mesic Great Basin scrub, meadows, and seeps on alkaline or subalkaline soils, 1100 to 2500 m elevation	Known to occur in Fish Slough ACEC
Silverleaf milkwetch <i>Astragalus argophyllus</i> var. <i>argophyllus</i> Fabaceae	CNPS List 2	Meadow, seeps, and playas on alkaline or saline soils, 1240 to 2350 m elevation	Known to occur in Fish Slough ACEC

Species	Listing Status	Habitat	Potential for Occurrence
Fish Slough milkvetch <i>Astragalus lentiginosus</i> var. <i>piscinensis</i> Fabaceae	FT CNPS 1B	Alkaline flats and mounds, restricted to the Fish Slough ACEC, 1130 to 1300 m elevation	Known only from the Fish Slough ACEC
Alkali ivesia <i>Ivesia kingii</i> var. <i>kingii</i> Fabaceae	BLMSS CNPS 1B	Great Basin scrub, meadows, seeps, playas on mesic alkaline clay soils, 1200 to 2130 m elevation	Known from disjunct populations in Fish Slough, Adobe Valley and Long Valley.
Inyo phacelia <i>Phacelia inyoensis</i> Hydrophyllaceae	CNPS List 1B	Alkaline meadows and seeps, 915 to 3200 m elevation	Known from Fish Slough ACEC
Torrey's blazingstar <i>Mentzelia torreyi</i> Loasaceae	CNPS List 2	Great Basin scrub, piñon-juniper woodland, on alkaline sandy or rocky soils, usually volcanic in origin, 1170 to 2835 m elevation	Known to occur in Fish Slough ACEC
<b>Monocotyledonous Plants</b>			
Thermal spring fimbry <i>Fimbristylis thermalis</i> Cyperaceae	CNPS List 2	Alkaline meadows and seeps near hot springs, 120 to 1340 m elevation	Known to occur in Fish Slough ACEC
Inyo County mariposa lily <i>Calochortus excavatus</i> Liliaceae	BLMSS CNPS List 1B	Alkaline meadows and seeps, mesic chenopod scrub, 1150 to 2000 m elevation	Known from Fish Slough ACEC distributed in small, disjunct populations throughout the Owens Valley
<b>Gastropods</b>			
Fish Slough springsnail <i>Pyrgulopsis perturbata</i> Hydrobiidae	CSA	Little known, found in wetlands within Fish Slough	Known to occur in Fish Slough ACEC
<b>Fish</b>			
Owens sucker ( <i>Catostomus fumeiventris</i> )	CSSC	Sections of Owens River and its tributaries with long runs, few riffles and fine substrates.	Known to occur in Fish Slough ACEC
Owens pupfish <i>Cyprinodon radiosus</i> Cyprinodontidae	FE CE	Clear, warm waters of spring pools, sloughs, irrigation ditches, swamps, and flooded pastures along the Owens River from Fish Slough in Mono County to near Independence in Inyo County	Known to occur in Fish Slough ACEC
Owens speckled dace ( <i>Rhinichthys osculus</i> )	CSSC	Small coldwater streams and hot spring systems in the Owens Basin	Known to occur in Fish Slough ACEC
<b>Birds</b>			
Northern harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> Accipitridae	CSSC	Upland, flooded, agricultural, and habitats with low vegetation (saltbush creosote scrub)	Known as a fairly common migrant in the ACEC
Swainson's hawk <i>Buteo swainsoni</i> Accipitridae	CT	Riparian woodland or sparse savannah with tall (usually > 40 feet) cottonwood or large willow for nesting and adjacent open land such as native grasslands, cereal or alfalfa fields for foraging	Potential habitat exists but the species is not known to nest in the ACEC.



Species	Listing Status	Habitat	Potential for Occurrence
Golden eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> Accipitridae	BLMSS CFPS CSSC	Remote cliff ledges in rocky hills or mountains for nesting; forages widely across the Mojave and Great Basin Desert landscapes but prefers rolling foothills and mountain terrain, wide arid plateaus, open mountain slopes, and cliffs and rock outcrops	Present irregularly in the ACEC which provides foraging and nesting habitat.
Prairie falcon <i>Falco mexicanus</i> Falconidae	BLMSS CSSC	Sheltered cliff ledges, bluffs, or rock outcrops for nesting; perennial desert grasslands and desert shrub lands in the Fish Slough ACEC, primarily in the spring and summer.	This species is widespread but uncommon at all seasons. Up to two pairs of nesting falcons have nested in the ACEC traditionally (Parker, 1993). Axelson (2000) reported an active prairie falcon aerie in the western part of the ACEC. Historical surveys are on file at the BLM Ridgecrest Field Office.

Explanation of Codes:

FT = Federally listed as Threatened

FE = Federally listed as Endangered

FPE = Federally Proposed for listing as Endangered

CE=Listed as Endangered by the State of California

CT=Listed as Threatened by the State of California

CSSC=Listed as Species of Special Concern by the State of California

CFPS=Listed as Fully Protected Species by the State of California

CSA=Listed as a Special Animal by the State of California

CNPS 1B = California Native Plant Society (CNPS) listing for Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere

CNPS 2 = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere

BLMSS=Bureau of Land Management Special Status Species

### Nesting Birds

Nesting birds, including raptors, are protected by the California Department of Fish and Game Code 3503, which reads, "It is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto." Passerines and non-passerine land birds are further protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA: 16 U.S.C., sec. 703, Supp. I, 1989) which prohibits killing, possessing, or trading in migratory birds, except in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. This Act encompasses whole birds, parts of birds, and bird nests and eggs. Trail re-route activities for the proposed project would remove vegetation that could potentially result in disturbance to nesting birds including, but not limited to, bird species listed in Table 1. However, impacts to nesting birds will be reduced to less than significant with the incorporation of Mitigation BIO-1 (see below).

### Special-Status Plant Species

Federally threatened and other special-status plant species listed in Table 1 could potentially be damaged or killed by heavy equipment operation if they are growing within the project footprint. However, impacts to any federally threatened or other special-status plant species will be reduced to less than significant with the incorporation of Mitigation BIO-1 (see below).

## Special Status Wildlife Species

Gastropod and fish species listed in Table 1 could potentially be impacted by sediment filled runoff entering Fish Slough Lake from the project area. However, no mitigation measures are necessary to protect these species because all potential impacts will be avoided due to the implementation of the following Erosion Control and Water Quality BMPs:

### Erosion and Sediment Control

- *Topsoil Salvage:* Retention of topsoil and of associated indigenous seed bank and soil micro biota is fundamental to facilitating site restoration and reducing site rehabilitation costs. BLM shall salvage all topsoil and re-spread it as soon as possible following soil disturbance. Proper interim protection and storage of topsoil is essential before re-spreading. Topsoil shall remain covered to protect it from soil loss and degradation of soil biota. If a highly structured soil exists on the site, soil removal will entail separating solid horizons or sub-horizons.
- *Minimize Earth Movement:* Confine construction to the most level portions of the site. Keep disturbed areas small.
- *Avoid Steep Slopes and Highly Erodible Soils:* Leaving such areas undisturbed minimizes the need for costly control measures and reduces the risk of property damage and water pollution. Design impact on slopes no steeper than 3:1 ratio.
- *Align Roads along Contours:* Runoff down roadways is a common cause of erosion problems. Aligning roads along contours minimizes the velocity of roadway runoff. In addition, such alignment blends into the landscape better without being visually obtrusive.
- *Retain Natural Vegetation Whenever Feasible:* Vegetation is the most effective form of erosion control. Saving and salvaging vegetation reduces the need to build costly structural controls such as sediment basins and concrete-lined channels.
- *Vegetate and Mulch Denuded Areas:* Mulch helps protect the soil until vegetation is established. It also improves the rate of seedling establishment.
- *Divert Runoff Away from Denuded Areas:* When vegetative cover is removed from a slope, the slope becomes highly susceptible to erosion. Only the runoff from rain that falls directly on the disturbed slope should be allowed to cross it. Divert upslope runoff away to a stable outlet.
- *Soil, Water, and Air:* Limit vegetation removal and other surface disturbing activities to the minimum required for project implementation. Require soil retaining structures or other special methods as needed to control erosion on steep slopes or unstable soils.
- Avoid the use of soil disturbing equipment or vehicles on wet, poorly drained or erosive soils.
- Secure any necessary permits or clearances from state and local agencies relative to air quality requirements for projects that may impact air quality.

### Water Quality

- Erosion from nonpoint pollution sources shall be minimized through implementation of BMPs such as correct spacing of waterbars on trails, locating roads and trails on natural benches or ridges well away from stream courses and other water bodies, avoid creating berms that hinder drainage on low gradient roads, revegetate roads and trails when use is terminated.
- All necessary control measures for minimizing erosion and sedimentation, whether structural or vegetal, shall be properly established prior to November 15 each year.
- All structural and vegetal measures taken to control erosion and sedimentation shall be properly maintained.
- A filter strip of appropriate width, and consisting of undisturbed soil and riparian

vegetation or its equivalent, shall be maintained, wherever possible, between significant land disturbance activities and watercourses, lakes, bays, estuaries, marshes, and other water bodies. For construction activities, minimum width of the filter strip shall be thirty feet, wherever possible as measured along the ground surface to the highest anticipated water line.

- Design and maintenance of erosion and sediment control structures, (e.g. debris and settling basins, drainage ditches, culverts, etc.) shall comply with accepted engineering practices.

#### **Mitigation:**

The following mitigation measure will avoid or reduce biological resources impacts to less than significant levels:

**Measure Bio-1:** Implementation of these measures will ensure that no significant impacts occur as a result of the proposed project. These measures also ensure that no CEQA Standards of Significance are exceeded, and are as follows:

- If the project cannot be completed outside of the bird nesting season (February 1 through August 31 of any given year), a qualified biologist would conduct a pre-construction survey for nesting birds (especially within the trail re-route section where vegetation is to be removed) prior to starting work if the work has the potential to impact nesting birds. If nesting birds are found, implementation of the project may be delayed until after nesting is completed. Work may occur if an adequate buffer, as determined by a qualified biologist, can be established between the construction activity and the nest.
- The project footprint shall be surveyed for the presence of any listed and/or special status plants prior to start of construction. If any listed and/or special status plants cannot be positively identified outside of the blooming period, surveys should take place during the appropriate bloom time (prior to the start of construction) for the plants listed in Table 1. If any listed plant species or other sensitive plants are discovered during these surveys, the occurrence shall be flagged and avoided within the limits of project construction.
- Surveys for noxious weed infestations will be completed prior to and after completion of the project. If any noxious weed infestations are identified within or adjacent to the project area, the weeds will be immediately removed by hand pulling or digging to ensure that no noxious weed bank would develop.
- Staging areas shall be clearly flagged to prevent heavy equipment from damaging sensitive habitats and plant species.

**Effectiveness:** Will reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels.

**Implementation:** Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office.

**Timing:** Prior to and throughout construction phase.

**Monitoring:** Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office.

**b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?**

**Less than Significant Impact.** The project consists of a trail closure and armoring in an alkali meadow, a designated State of California Rare Natural Community. However, there will be no impact to this sensitive natural community because all work will be completed in areas

that are devoid of vegetation due to off-highway vehicle use. The project will actually restore an impacted area by closing the Eastside trail and loosening soil to allow native vegetation to recolonize. Furthermore, a portion of Fish Slough Road would be armored to encourage off-highway vehicles to stay on designated trails and away from sensitive habitat. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 as stated under section a) above and Biological BMPs as stated on page 11 within Chapter 2 would be implemented to avoid any impacts to the alkali meadow and the endemic plants found there.

**c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?**

**No Impact.** The proposed project trail re-route would occur in desert scrub habitat and the road armoring and trail closure would occur in an alkali meadow habitat. No federally protected wetlands would be affected.

**d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?**

**Less than Significant Impact.** The project would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species. Due to the temporary nature of the project construction (two to three weeks) and the small size of the trail re-route ( $\frac{3}{4}$  mile) and the fact that the proposed re-route is surrounded on either side by undisturbed contiguous habitat, wildlife movement will not be impacted.

**e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?**

**f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?**

**No Impact.** Responses e and f. The project area is not covered under an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. The project does not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. The project meets management directives in the BLM Bishop Field Office Management Plan (1993), the Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental Concern Plan (1984), and the USFWS Owens Basin Wetland and Aquatic Species Recovery Plan (1996), which designate the Fish Slough ACEC as a Conservation Area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>V. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Sources:

- 1) Anne Halford, Botanist. BLM Bishop Field Office. Personal communications. November 2005.
- 2) Giambastiani, Mark A. 1993 Letter Report to the BLM, Bishop Resource Area, Concerning the Surface Survey for the Proposed East Side Road Realignment. On file at the BLM, Bishop Field Office, Bishop, CA.
- 3) 2004 Prehistoric Obsidian Use on the Volcanic Tableland and its Implications for Settlement patterns and Technological Change in the Western Great Basin. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California Davis.

### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** All areas that would be impacted by ground disturbing activities have been surveyed for cultural resources under BLM Class III Standards. Based upon the surveys, there would be no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to heritage or cultural resource values. The project would not adversely affect districts or sites listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, nor would it result in loss or destruction of significant cultural or historical resources.

*Would the project:*

- a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?**
- b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?**

- c. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?
- d. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

**Less than Significant Impact.** Responses a – d. The proposed realignment route was originally intensively surveyed under BLM Class III standards (<30 meter spaced transects) by Mark Giambastiani and the University of California Field School in 1993. A corridor 150 meters wide was surveyed. The work was conducted under the supervision of the Bishop Field Office archaeologist. No sites were found to be located on the proposed route. One site, CA-MNO-1992, is located adjacent to the north end of the route and test excavation units were placed in this locality to determine if the route would impact the site. The route was then realigned to avoid affecting CA-MNO-1992. Giambastiani (2004) also completed further block surveys in the area, which contained a half mile of the proposed route. No sites were recorded within the route corridor during this inventory.

Therefore, based upon the surveys described above and the realignment of the trail to avoid a sensitive site, there would be no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to heritage / cultural resource values. The project would not adversely affect districts or sites listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, nor would it result in loss or destruction of significant cultural or historical resources.

There is potential, however, for the discovery of yet undiscovered cultural resources during trail armoring, re-routing, and closure. The Cultural Resource measure as stated on page 11 indicates that trails would be re-routed or relocated to avoid cultural resource sites if they are found during project implementation.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

### Sources:

- 1) California Geologic Survey. California Geologic Survey: Index to Official Maps of Earthquake Fault Zones. May 3, 2005. State of California. May 25, 2005.  
{[http://www.consrv.ca.gov/CGS/rghm/ap/Map\\_index/index.htm](http://www.consrv.ca.gov/CGS/rghm/ap/Map_index/index.htm)}.
- 2) Sawyer, T.L., compiler, 1995, Fault number 46, Unnamed faults in Volcanic Tablelands, in Quaternary fault and fold database of the United States, ver 1.0: U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 03-417, <http://qfaults.cr.usgs.gov>.

### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** There are a number of unnamed faults in the Volcanic Tablelands Area, which includes the project area. Because the project consists of a trail re-route, closure and armoring on flat and stable areas there will be no significant geologic impacts associated with the project. The project will not result in significant exposure of people to significant geologic impacts, nor will the project itself result in impacts from geologic events.

*Would the project:*

**a. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:**

**i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?**

**ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?**

**iii) Seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction?**

**iv) Landslides?**

**Less than significant impact.** A review of available geologic maps for the project area indicates that the site is located near several Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones. The United States Geological Survey Earthquake Hazards Program documents unnamed faults in the Volcanic Tableland area. These faults are poorly understood and have only been evaluated and mapped at reconnaissance levels. However, because no permanent structures would be constructed and trails constructed are for recreational use only, any impacts associated with the proposed project would be less than significant. Trail closure and re-route areas are relatively flat with no landslide potential. The type of land use (trails) is such that users will be outdoors; they can leave the area readily in the event of an earthquake, strong seismic ground shaking and/or minor ground liquefaction.

**b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?**

**c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?**

**d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?**



**Less than Significant Impact.** Responses b – d. For the most part, the specific project sites are flat and stable, and as such, construction and operation of the recreational trails would not result in significant soil erosion. Implementation of BLM construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) which are required for all projects requiring grading would further reduce the potential for erosion.

**e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?**

**No Impact.** The project does not propose the installation of new septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems as no restrooms are proposed.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐
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## VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

### Sources:

- 1) Department of Toxic Substance Control's Hazardous Waste and Substances Site.  
[http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/database/Calsites/Cortese\\_List.cfm](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/database/Calsites/Cortese_List.cfm). November 2005.

### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** No health hazards will occur as a result of the trail re-route, closure and armoring. The project will not result in increased exposure to OHV users and recreationalists to hazardous waste or fire hazards.

*Would the project:*

**a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?**

**No impact.** Gasoline is the only hazardous material that the construction workers and OHV enthusiasts would use. Typically gas would be contained within the vehicles including OHVs that use the trails. During project construction, gas will be contained within the heavy equipment used for closing, re-routing and armoring trails. The construction and operation of the project would not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of other types of hazardous materials such as asbestos, lead, toxic waste, etc.

**b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?**

**No impact.** No release of hazardous materials is expected either in the construction or operation of the proposed trails.

**c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or hazardous waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?**

**No Impact.** The proposed project does not involve the handling of hazardous materials or cause the emission of hazardous substances. None of the project components are within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.

**d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?**

**No Impact.** No hazardous materials or areas identified on the Cortese list are located within either Mono or Inyo County. The Fish Slough area is not on the Department of Toxic Substance Control's Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List.

**e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?**

**f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?**

**No impact.** Responses e – f. The project site is not in proximity to an airport such that persons using the lands would be subject to aircraft hazards, including increased noise. The Bishop Airport located near the intersection of Highway 395 and Highway 6 is approximately seven miles south of the Fish Slough area. Coyote Flats Airport is located south and slightly west of the City of Bishop, which is roughly 18 miles southwest of the project area, Mammoth-June Lakes Airport is roughly 25 miles west of the project area, and Independence Airport is roughly 45 miles south of the project area.

**g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

**Less than Significant Impact.** This project will actually improve trails and access in the Fish Slough area and would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

**h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?**

**Less than Significant Impact.** The project area is not located in an urbanized interface where residences are intermixed with wildlands. The nearest residence to the project area is two and a half miles to the south. Allowable uses on BLM lands include outdoor recreation and camping. In the event of a wild fire in the vicinity of the project, existing BLM fire control and evacuation protocols would be implemented.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

### Sources:

- 1) ESRI/FEMA Project Impact Hazard Information and Awareness WebSite.  
<http://mapserver2.esri.com/cgi-bin/hazard.adol?z=c&c=-123.599459%2C40.333580&p=4&d=0&s=0&cd=p&Map.x=175&Map.y=72> Nov. 2005.

### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** The proposed project will not significantly affect either existing drainage patterns nor will it create increased drainage or sediment discharge. Standard BLM Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used to minimize any impacts associated with the project.

#### a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

#### f. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

**Less than Significant Impact.** Responses a and f. The project will not discharge any sediment into any surface waters. The project will actually improve drainage and absorption along Fish Slough Road. The other portions of the project are designed in such a way as to avoid altering the existing drainage patterns of the area or result in an increase of the rate or amount of surface runoff.

#### b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

**No Impact.** The project does not require water and therefore, will not deplete groundwater supplies. In addition, the proposed trail, closure area and armoring area will not be paved and, therefore, would not increase the amount of impervious surfaces in the project area. The armoring of Fish Slough Road will be completed using a two to three foot layer of shale. The angularity of the shale substrate is not impervious and would allow for sufficient drainage.

**c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?**

**d. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?**

**e. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?**

**Less than Significant Impact.** Responses c - e. The trail closure, re-route and armoring will be designed and constructed in such a way as to avoid altering the existing drainage patterns of the area or result in an increase of the rate or amount of surface runoff. The project does not propose to cross any stream or rivers. Standard BLM Water Quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) are listed on page 11. These will minimize any drainage impacts from the project.

**g. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?**

**No Impact.** This proposed Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project does not involve housing. The proposed project is not within a 100-year flood hazard area.

**h. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?**

**No Impact.** According to the FEMA Flood Hazard Maps of the area, the project area is not located within a flood hazard area or a 100-year floodplain.

**i. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Pleasant Valley Dam is located along the Owens River approximately eight miles west of Bishop and approximately 7.5 miles southwest of the proposed project. Upstream of the project site, three levees are identified on the USGS Topographic Map. These levees are approximately 2.5 miles, 2.6 miles and 5.6 miles from the proposed project. Even though there are levees upstream of the proposed project, the area is used for recreational purposes only and no permanent structures would be constructed. Therefore, recreational users would not be exposed to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam.

**j. Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?**

**No Impact.** The project is not located in area that is subject to inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING

### Sources:

- 1) Anne Halford, Botanist. BLM Bishop Field Office. Personal communications. November 2005.
- 2) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993.
- 3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1998. Owens Basin Wetland and Aquatic Species Recovery Plan, Inyo and Mono Counties, California. Portland, Oregon.
- 4) National Geographic Maps. TOPO!. 2004.

### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** There is no established community within the project area. The closest large "established community" is Bishop, which is seven miles to the south, and Mammoth Lakes which is 33 miles to the northwest. The project will not conflict with either the Mono or Inyo Counties General Plans or Zoning Ordinances, as the site is on federally owned lands and is thus exempt from County planning guidelines. The project site is not located in a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan area.

#### a. Physically divide an established community?

**No Impact.** There is no established community within the project area. The closest large "established community" is Bishop which is seven miles to the south and Mammoth Lakes which is 33 miles to the northwest.



**b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?**

**No Impact.** No land use and planning impacts would occur from the proposed project. The project will not conflict with either the Mono or Inyo Counties General Plans or Zoning Ordinance, as the site is on federally owned lands and is thus exempt from County planning guidelines.

Management direction for the project is guided by, and intended to implement the direction contained within the Bishop Resource Management Plan (BRMP), the Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Plan, and the USFWS Owens Basin Wetland and Aquatic Species Recovery Plan. The goals set forth for the Fish Slough ACEC in the *Bishop Resource Management Plan* are to protect endangered fish and sensitive plant habitats, wetlands, cultural properties, geologic features and scenic values. Therefore, the project is implementing the goals of the BRMP by protecting sensitive plants and their habitat. The USFWS Owens Basin Wetland and Aquatic Species Recovery Plan lists six actions needed to recover and delist the Fish Slough milk-vetch, Owens pupfish, and Owens tui chub. Of the six actions, two actions will be implemented by this project. The two actions are: 1) Manage Conservation Areas [including the Fish Slough ACEC] to control deleterious non-native plants and animals, rehabilitate habitats, reestablish populations, and protect habitats; and 2) Implement population and habitat monitoring in Conservation Areas [including the Fish Slough ACEC]. The project would not conflict with applicable environmental plans or policies in any of the above mentioned plans.

**c. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?**

**No Impact.** The project site is not located in a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>X. MINERAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## X. MINERAL RESOURCES

### Sources:

1) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993.

### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** Construction of the proposed project will not result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources of regional or local importance.

**a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?**

**b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?**

**No Impact.** Responses a and b. Construction of the proposed project will not result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources of regional or local importance. In the BMRP, the BLM identified the Volcanic Tableland OHV Management Area, which contains the Fish Slough ACEC, as having extensive mineral material deposits occurring throughout the area. However, project construction will not require the removal of material from the area and it will not result in the establishment of land uses that would preclude mineral extraction in the event that important mineral resources are discovered in the future.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XI. NOISE -- Would the project result in:</b>				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## XI. NOISE

### Sources:

1) Anne Halford, Botanist. BLM Bishop Field Office. Personal communications. November 2005. 2) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993. 3) Richard Williams, Outdoor Recreation Planner. BLM Bishop Field Office. Personal communications. December 2005.

### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** Because the construction phase of the project is temporary (two-three weeks), no noise impacts from the construction phase of the project should occur. The project will not introduce a new use to the area. It is not expected that the existing noise levels will be

increased significantly, nor will the number of sensitive receptors in the immediate area increase, since the immediate area is owned by BLM. The closest residence is 2.5 miles to the south and will not be impacted by the project due to its distance away from the project.

*Would the project:*

**a. Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?**

**No Impact.** OHV activities already take place in the project area and OHV use is allowable on existing trails within the Fish Slough ACEC. According to the Outdoor Recreation Planner at the Bishop Field Office, the establishment of the trail re-route and armoring could slightly increase the number of users in the area, but the additional use would not significantly increase actual noise to levels such that they would be unacceptable under the BRMP.

**b. Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Any ground borne vibration that may occur as a result of the proposed project will be temporary. The length of the project is estimated at two to three weeks. Once completed, this project would no longer produce any ground borne vibration.

**c. A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?**

**No Impact.** OHV activities already take place in the project area. The establishment of the trail re-route and armoring could increase the number of users in the area, but the additional use would not significantly increase actual noise to levels above those that currently exist from the existing OHV use of the area. Additionally, the closest residence is two and a half miles to the south and will not be impacted by the project due to its distance away from the project.

**d. A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project may increase noise levels temporarily during project construction due to heavy construction equipment ripping the soil along the closed trail, grading the trail re-route, and dumping and spreading shale for the trail armoring. Heavy equipment use will be restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. The project is temporary and will only last two to three weeks.

**e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?**

**f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?**

**No Impact.** Responses e-f. The nearest public airport is more than seven miles from the project area in Bishop.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

### Source:

- 1) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993.
- 2) Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office. *Application for State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Maintenance, Trail Conservation, and Trail Reroute Grant Application Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project*, #OR-1-B-55, 2005 – 2006.

### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** No permanent population and/or housing would be generated as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project will not add any new permanent residents to the area. The proposed project will not displace existing housing in the area, as all facilities are on BLM lands.

**a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?**

**b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

**c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

**No Impact.** Responses a – c. No permanent population and/or housing would be generated as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project will not add any new permanent residents to the area. The proposed project will not displace existing housing in the area, as all facilities are on BLM lands.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES --</b>				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
v) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES

#### Sources:

- 1) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993.
- 2) Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office. *Application for State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Maintenance, Trail Conservation, and Trail Reroute Grant Application Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project*, #OR-1-B-55, 2005 – 2006.
- 3) Richard Williams, Outdoor Recreation Planner. BLM Bishop Field Office. Personal communications. December 2005.

#### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** The project would not increase the need for public services; BLM will continue to provide fire and police protection and would maintain the new trail.

**a. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:**

- i) Fire protection?**
- ii) Police protection?**
- iii) Schools?**
- iv) Parks?**
- v) Other public facilities?**

**No Impact.** Responses i – v. The project is contained entirely within the BLM Volcanic Tableland OHV management area. No local governmental facilities related to fire protection, police protection, schools, parks or other public facilities will be impacted by the proposed project, nor will any new local governmental facilities need to be built as a result of the proposed project. The Volcanic Tableland OHV management area is currently patrolled at least three times a week. A federal law enforcement officer completes a minimum of two patrols per week and an additional patrol is completed on the weekend by Audubon Society volunteers. These patrols would not require the construction of new public facilities to serve the project. BLM will continue to provide fire and police protection and would maintain the new trail.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XIV. RECREATION --</b>				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### XIV. RECREATION

##### Sources:

- 1) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993.
- 2) Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office. *Application for State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Maintenance, Trail Conservation, and Trail Reroute Grant Application Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project*, #OR-1-B-55, 2005 – 2006.

##### Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** The proposed project would not adversely affect recreational opportunities; conversely, it would result in a beneficial effect to existing recreational opportunities by improving riding conditions.

**a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?**

**b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

**No Impact.** Responses a and b. The proposed project would not adversely affect recreational opportunities; conversely, it would result in a beneficial effect to existing recreational opportunities by improving riding conditions. One portion of a trail will be closed, however an alternative route will be provided. Signs will be installed directing users to the new section of trail.



	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

### Sources:

- 1) Anne Halford, Botanist. BLM Bishop Field Office. Personal communications. November 2005.
- 2) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993.
- 3) Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office. *Application for State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Maintenance, Trail Conservation, and Trail Reroute Grant Application Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project, #OR-1-B-55, 2005 – 2006.*
- 4) Richard Williams, Outdoor Recreation Planner. BLM Bishop Field Office. Personal communications. December 2005.

## Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** A slight increase in traffic will occur while shale is being transported from Silver Canyon to the Fish Slough Area for the road armoring project. However, this increase will be insignificant (less than six truck loads). The proposed project will not result in a change in air traffic patterns, and would improve drainage and emergency access. No new parking areas are proposed for this project.

**a. Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?**

**Less than Significant Impact.** A slight increase in traffic will occur while shale is being transported from Silver Canyon to the Fish Slough Area. However, this increase will be insignificant (less than six truck loads).

**b. Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?**

**Less than Significant Impact.** A slight increase in traffic will occur on one county maintained dirt road and US Highway 120 while materials are being transported from Silver Canyon to the Fish Slough Area. However, this increase will be insignificant (less than six truck loads).

**c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?**

**No Impact.** The proposed project will not result in a change in air traffic patterns.

**d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?**

**No Impact.** The project would actually improve the design of the trail by using proper drainage techniques thus reducing hazards associated with pooling water or muddy trails.

**e. Result in inadequate emergency access?**

**No Impact.** The proposed project will improve emergency access by armoring a trail to decrease pooling water. It does not require any changes to roadway or intersection design or result in incompatible uses.

**f. Result in inadequate parking capacity?**

**No Impact.** At the end of Fish Slough Road there is a turn-around and a small parking lot. The Outdoor Recreation Planner at the Bishop Field Office states that the establishment of the trail re-route and armoring along Fish Slough Road could slightly increase the number of users in the area. A traffic counter installed over an 11 month period in the year 2000 recorded a total of 416 vehicles using Fish Slough Road to access Fish Slough Lake. Based on the low

number of users and the type of recreation (mainly hunting and some fishing) the slight increase in users would not result in inadequate parking.

**g. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?**

**No Impact.** The proposed project will not conflict with adopted alternative transportation policies.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

### Sources:

- 1) Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), April 1993.
- 2) Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office. *Application for State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Maintenance, Trail Conservation, and Trail Reroute Grant Application Fish Slough Rare Plant Restoration and Protection Project*, #OR-1-B-55, 2005 – 2006.

## Explanation of Answers:

**Summary:** Wastewater generation will not increase as a result of the proposed project because no new restrooms will be constructed. No new storm water drainage facilities, or the expansion of existing facilities will occur as a result of the project.

**a. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?**

**b. Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

**No Impact.** Responses a and b. Wastewater generation will not increase as a result of the proposed project because no new restrooms will be constructed. Therefore, no water or wastewater treatment facilities will be needed.

**c. Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

**No Impact.** No new storm water drainage facilities, or the expansion of existing facilities will occur as a result of the project.

**d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?**

**No Impact.** No new water supplies or entitlements will be needed, as no new restrooms or drinking fountains are proposed.

**e. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?**

**No impact.** The project does not involve construction of any restrooms.

**f. Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?**

**No Impact.** This project is not anticipated to generate any solid waste. Therefore, the project will not exceed the local landfill's permitted capacity.

**g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?**

**No Impact.** Because no solid waste is anticipated to be generated by the project, it will comply with all applicable laws related to solid waste.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE --</b>				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## **XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?**

**Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporation.** BLM Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) as listed in the project overview of this CEQA document will be applied to the project to avoid and minimize significant impacts to wildlife and plant species, water quality, air quality, noise and cultural resources. In addition, mitigation measures included in this Initial Study will reduce biological impacts of the project to less than significant. Thus, the project will have less-than-significant impacts to all environmental factors listed in this section.

**b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?**

**Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed trail armoring follows an existing road bed in a designated OHV area. The trail closure will prevent any cumulative effects from occurring to the sensitive habitat and plant species located in the Alakali Meadow. The re-route will not lead to additional trail construction. In addition, the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures and Best Management Practices as listed in the Project Overview Section of this Initial Study further reduce the cumulative impacts from the proposed project.

**c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?**

**No Impact.** The proposed project will not have substantial adverse effects on human beings. The project area is within Bureau of Land Management lands and these lands are surrounded by sparsely populated areas. No neighboring communities will be substantially impacted by this project.

## **Chapter 4. Report Preparation**

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